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MEDITERRANEAN-DEAD SEA TUNNEL TO RESTORE HOLY LAND

With the Jews to the end of the earth deeply stirred by the fulfillment of prophecies which lead them to believe that the hour of the founding of their New Zion is about to strike, and with many of them actually planning a return to the land of their forefathers, the question of the potential ability of that land to support a greatly increased population at once arises.

There is no possible doubt that the Palestine of Biblical days, with a rainfall not greatly in excess of that of the present time, supported an almost exclusively agricultural population of many millions.

Yet it is because some kind of power is indispensable to any extensive reclamation in Palestine, that these normally prohibitive limitations have not been allowed to bar completely the door of the future. One source of power, though a hitherto untried one, still remains—the sea. I do not mean, tide power, for the Mediterranean is practically tideless; but rather the utilization of the difference in elevation between the surface of the great Middle Sea and that of the deeply sunk valley of the Jordan. As the dead sea is almost 1,300 feet lower than the Mediterranean, and as the supply of water from the latter is inexhaustible, it follows that the principal problem in connection with such a project will be an engineering one—the construction of the necessary works at a reasonable cost. Given the power that can undoubtedly be developed through such an installation, the restoration of Palestine to a productiveness that will support a population of many millions may be reckoned as an absolute certainty.

There are several extensive areas in the world that are below the level of the sea—notably in the western Sahara and the Colorado Desert of our own Southwest—but none where such a project as has now been put forward in Palestine could be advanced seriously. Yet, this boldest of modern engineering projects, unexampled though it is, is quite simple in its basic concep-

tions. A 37-mile tunnel through comparatively soft rock, a turbine installation to develop tens of thousands of horsepower, a transmission line to a great pumping plant 60 miles away, a couple of main canals to carry the lifted water, and the usual system of laterals and ditches—construct these at a cost that will not leave too heavy an interest charge against the land reclaimed, and Palestine can be made to provide "milk and honey," to say nothing of grain and fruit and sugar, for the population vastly in excess of that ruled over even by King Solomon. Without it, any attempt to found a New Zion through greatly augmenting the present population of Palestine would be almost certain to result in failure.

No one with the least interest in hydro-electric development can ever have visited Palestine without remarking the power possibilities latent in the proximity of the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea depression, but the fact that the Turk was in control of the country put even a tentative study of the engineering side of such a project out of the question.

Doubtless the first thing an engineer would investigate in studying power development and irrigation for Palestine is the possibility of turning to advantage the fall of the Jordan between the foot of the Sea of Galilee and the head of the Dead Sea. As the latter is 1,292 ft. below sea level and the former 682 ft., the Jordan will be seen to have a fall of 610 ft. in its sinuous course of 185 miles. As the river is very winding, a canal of something like 60 miles in length would suffice to carry water to a point above the head of the Dead Sea.

The details of the project do not appear to have been worked out to a point where more than an approximation of the acreage reclaimable has been arrived at, and this, of course, varies greatly according to the areas the water is carried to. If the plains of Esdraelon and Sharon are included in the scheme, this might well run to several hundred thousand acres. The water available from the Jordan drainage area is the limiting consideration, as the generation of enough power for pumping is merely dependent upon the size of the tunnel from the Mediterranean.

Scarcely less important in the long run than the Sea of Galilee project in restoring Palestine to fruitfulness, will be the utilization of a part of the power from the Dead Sea hydro-electric plant for pumping from wells. A land with so many perennial springs and wells as this can hardly fail to be underlaid with inexhaustible reservoirs of water that can be tapped by boring. There has never been an attempt to develop artesian water in Palestine, although the formation is such that it is more than probable that flowing wells would be brought in at no very considerable depth. But with cheap power, even good pumping wells would make possible the irrigation of many rich wadies and plains in the south and west of the country that cannot hope to be brought within any extensions of the Sea of Galilee project. Some of the best paying crops in California, Algeria, and India are raised by water pumped from wells under conditions no more favorable than those which should obtain in Palestine for this kind of farming.

A comprehensive system of reforestation, carried out concurrently with the construction of the power and irrigation works, would in time act to conserve the by no means inconsiderable rainfall of the country, and ultimately make it possible to raise crops by irrigation from the augmented flow of streams long dry.

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Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Rees were greatly surprised by a visit from Mr. W. H. Taylor, from Washington, D. C., who brought greetings from Almas Shrine Temple, of Washington, of which Mr. Rees is a member. Mr. Taylor went with the convention to San Francisco.

Mrs. H. L. Rees, secretary, and Mrs. D. E. Aiken, of the American Legion Auxiliary, visited the ex-service men at Compton Sanitarium on Friday, taking with them eight pounds of home made cany and strawberry jam. There are 43 ex-service men at this sanitarium and there are semi-monthly visits made there by members from the Torrance unit of the American Legion Auxiliary and the entertainment, reading matter and goodies are greatly appreciated.

DAY NURSERY

Mrs. Myrtle Lyons announces the opening of a Day Nursery at her home, 2118 Carson street, recently purchased, and has arranged to care for children of all ages, by the day, week or month. The premises are fenced off, with playgrounds, shade trees and play houses to amuse the youngsters. Children will receive the very best of care and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Los Angeles county and Torrance city health departments and boards of health. Single beds are provided and the care of the children is sanitary in every detail.—Advertisement.

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